(b) to (d) A proposal for enhancement of the existing rate of royalty on lignite has been received from the Government of Tamil Nadu and is under consideration of the Government.

News-item "Letter bomb blows up on mines bosses"

1162. DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "Letter bomb blows up on mine bosses" in the Telegraph, dated 8th February, 2001 regarding Bagdigi mine disaster; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government on the content of the reported letter by the Assistant Manager of Bagdigi Colliery and six other forewarning about the disaster?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A copy of the letter mentioned above was received in the Ministry of Coal on 13-2-2001. The Coal India Ltd., was requested to establish the authenticity of the letter. It has been reported that the said letter has not been received so far by Chairman, Coal India Limited.

Failure of rescue measures

1163. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rescue measures at Bagdigi coal mines could not succeed;

(b) if so, the reasons for the failure of rescue measures; and

(c) what action has been taken against the officers involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Rescue measures were initiated immediately after the accident and a multipronged strategy under the technical guidance of the DGMS officials was undertaken such as:—

(i) Search for all possible survivors upto the water logged workings.

(ii) Start of dewatering operations from both Bagdigi and Joyrampur sides.

(iii) Drilling operations from VIII seam to VII seam in the rise side of the panel to provide oxygen to any probable survivors who may have taken shelter in the rise side air pockets.

(iv) Establishment of an escape route to the victims who may be rescued from Joyrampur side.

(v) Requisition of services of naval underwater divers to search the air pockets for any survivors in advance of dewatering operations.

(vi) Shri Salim Ansari was rescued alive as he took shelter in a air pocket.

As the quantity of water to be pumped out was large, the pumping operations took time. The bodies of all 29 victims have been recovered and handed over to their families.

(b) In view of the reply to part (a) above, question does not arise.

(c) Internal Safety Organisation, Coal India Ltd. has taken up the enquiry of this accident. The finding of the enquiry report and recommendation will be implemented by the coal company.

DGMS, under Section 23 of Mines Act is conducting statutory enquiry.

Ministry of Labour is appointing a Court of Enquiry by a High Court Judge under Section 24 of Mines Act, 1952.

Minister of Coal visited the colliery on 10th February, 2001 and has placed three officers under suspension and transferred General Manager of the area.

Composition to the Families of Miners

1164. SHRI GAYA SINGH:

SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:

SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:

PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY:

SHRI VIJAY SINGH YADAV: